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CONSTRUCTIVE NATURAL THEOLOGY. NEWMAN SMYTH. Charles Scribner's Sons. 1913. Pp. viii, 123. \$1.00.

Dr. Smyth is preparing for future publication, as he tells us in the preface, a volume on that ultimate problem toward which the natural sciences and our spiritual faiths alike lead up—the problem of personality as a fact in nature. The chapters which compose this present volume are a by-product of that larger study, and were given as a course of lectures upon the Taylor Foundation of the Yale School of Religion. If the forthcoming and larger volume is as suggestive and stimulating as this smaller one, we may well eagerly await it.

In the first chapter the author shows in several aptly chosen illustrations the vast fields of knowledge that science is opening up as material for interpretation in the construction of a new natural theology. The watchword for that new theology is that it must be constructive. It must grip known facts, see them in their straight lines and right relations, discern their true proportion and perspective, but its final problem is one of values and meaning.

Dr. Smyth next deals with the problems which confront one in this arduous quest and the method to be pursued. Taking his stand on the “electron,” that “last jumping-off place of physics into the unknown and inconceivable,” he pushes fearlessly on that he may lead us to see the light and “interpret the spiritual expression that is on the very countenance of true science.”

It is admitted to be a venturesome attempt to approach the person of Christ from the nature side, and to read the meaning of human life in the personal consciousness of Jesus. Yet “nature itself leads to the consummate Man, and the inner consciousness of the perfect man throws back its light on all that has been before him.” Both the man of science and the man of faith have a right to stand on holy ground. When Moses saw the burning bush, he was a natural scientist when he said, “I will turn aside now, and see why the bush is not burnt.” Moses was a religious man when from out the midst of the bush he heard God calling him, and he hid his face, for he was afraid to look upon God. In that presence he quickly forgot his question, “Why?” We may the more readily discern the revelation if we recognize how naturally from the midst of the material world the unconsuming flame shines out.

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